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St. Paul, MN - Today, Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-MN04) responded to Rep. Michele Bachmann's (R-MN06) ongoing anti-government campaign by calling it "irresponsible" and again warned that this type of harsh and exaggerated political rhetoric can inspire violent political extremists. Yesterday, while addressing a Tea Party protest near the U.S. Capitol, Bachmann smeared President Obama and his administration by referring to them as "gangster government."

McCollum said of Bachmann's inflammatory remarks, "With hate groups and violent anti-government militias on the rise in this country elected leaders must be mindful of the potential of their words to inspire violence. Constructive, passionate political debate is expected in our democracy, but harsh, dangerous name-calling that vilifies the President or Members of Congress is irresponsible." McCollum added, "We must not ignore that the Oklahoma City bombing was an act of political violence perpetrated by deranged, anti-government extremists. It's much too late after a bomb goes off to start condemning hate-inspired, violent rhetoric."

Bachmann told a crowd of anti-government Tea Party protesters, "We're on to them; we're on to this gangster government." She added, "I'd say it's time for these little piggies to go home." Bachmann's rhetoric elicited a harsh rebuke from President Bill Clinton. While speaking on the subject of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Clinton cautioned that attempts to incite government opposition can provoke destructive consequences and responded to Bachmann by saying, "They are not gangsters. They were elected."

Yesterday's inflammatory comments from Congresswoman Bachmann were only the latest in a series of disturbing calls to action.

- "I want people in Minnesota armed and dangerous on this issue of the energy tax because we need to fight back."
- "[Health care reform] cannot pass. What we have to do today is make a covenant, to slit our wrists, be blood brothers on this thing. This will not pass. We will do whatever it takes to make sure this doesn't pass."

Rep. Bachmann's comments come on the heels of Rep. McCollum's statement this week on the floor of the House of Representatives, which asked Members of Congress to stop using specific rhetoric that could incite and fuel violence from anti-government extremists.

